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BY
G. DAWES HICKS, Ph.D., Litt.D.,
Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of London.

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N.B.—The name of the Minister of the Chapel is in all cases inserted, unless instructions are received to the contrary by Thursday morning before the date of issue.

SUNDAY, December 25.

LONDON.

Acton, Creffield-road, 11.15 and 7, Rev. A. C. HOLDEN, M.A.
Bermondsey, Fort-road, 7, Mr. A. ALLEN.
Blackfriars Mission and Stamford-street Chapel, 11 and 7, Rev. J. C. BALLANTYNE.
Brixton, Unitarian Christian Church, Effra-road, 11, Rev. G. C. CRESSEY, D.D. No Evening Service.
Child's Hill, All Souls', Walthamstow, Finchley-road, 11.15 and 6.30, Rev. EDGAR DAPLYN.
Croydon, Free Christian Church, Wellesley-road, 11, Rev. W. J. JUPP; 7, No Service.
Essex Church, The Mall, Notting Hill Gate, 11, Rev. FRANK K. FREESTON. Week night Carol Service on Friday, 23rd, at 8.
Finchley (Church End), Fern Bank Hall, Gravel Hill, 6.30, Rev. J. A. PEARSON.
Forest Gate, corner of Dunbar-road, Upton-lane, 11, Rev. D. DAVIS. No Evening Service.
Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham-place, 11.15, Rev. W. WOODING, B.A. Morning Service only.
Hampstead, Rosslyn-hill Chapel, 11.15 and 6.30, Rev. H. GOW, B.A.
Highgate-hill Unitarian Christian Church, 11 and 7, Rev. A. A. CHARLESWORTH.
Ilford, High-road, 11, Mr. T. N. Ashelford; 7, Rev. J. F. PARMITER.
Islington, Unity Church, Upper-street, 11 and 7, Rev. Dr. TUDOR JONES.
Kentish Town, Clarence-road, N.W., 11, Mr. A. SAVAGE COOPER. No Evening Service.
Kilburn, Quex-road, 11 and 7, Rev. C. ROPER.
Lewisham, Unitarian Christian Church, High-street, 11 and 7, Rev. W. W. CHYNOWETH POPE.
Deptford, Church and Mission, Church-street, 6.30.
Mansfield-street Church and Mission, Bethnal Green; 7, Rev. GORDON COOPER.
Peckham, Avondale road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. LAWRENCE CLARE.
Richmond, Free Church, Ormond-road, 11.15 and 7, Dr. F. W. G. FOAT, D.Litt., M.A.
Stoke Newington Green, 11.15 and 7, Rev. J. LIONEL TAYLER.
Stratford Unitarian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. JOHN ELLIS.
University Hall, Gordon-square, 11.15 and 7, Rev. J. PAGE HOPPS.
Wandsworth Unitarian Christian Church, East Hill, 11 and 7, Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.
Wimbledon, Smaller Worple Hall, Worple-road, 7, Rev. GEO. CRITCHLEY, B.A.
Wood Green Unity Church, 11, and 7, Rev. JOSEPH WILSON.
Woolwich, Carmel Chapel, Anglesea-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. L. JENKINS JONES.

ABERYSTWYTH, New Street Meeting House, 11 and 6.30. Supply.
BATH, Trim-street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. McDOWELL.
BELFAST, All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, 11.30 and 7, Rev. ELLISON A. VOYSEY, M.A.
BIRMINGHAM, Old Meeting Church, Bristol-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. JOSEPH WOOD.
BIRMINGHAM, Church of the Messiah, Broad-street, Rev. J. WORSLEY AUSTIN.
BLACKBURN, King William street, near Sudell Cross, 10.45 and 6.30.
BLACKPOOL, Dickson-road, North Shore, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. J. HORACE SHORT.
BLACKPOOL, South Shore Unitarian Free Church, Lytham-road South, 11 and 6.30.
BOLTON, Halliwell-road Free Church, 10.45, Scholars' Service; 6.30, Rev. J. ISLAM JONES, M.A.
BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West Hill-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. V. D. DAVIS.
BRADFORD, Chapel Lane Chapel, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. H. McLACHLAN.
BRIGHTON, Free Christian Church, New-road, 11 and 7, Rev. PRIESTLEY PRIME.

BUXTON, Hartington-road Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. GEORGE STREET.

CHATHAM, Unitarian Christian Church, Ham-mond-hill 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. M. WHITE-MAN.

CHELMSFORD, Unitarian Church, Legg-street, 6.30, Mr. A. R. P. HINCKLEY.

CHESTER, Matthew Henry's Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. D. JENKIN EVANS.

CLIFTON, Oakfield-road Church, 11 and 6.30.

DOVER, Adrian-street, near Market-square, 11 and 6.30, Rev. C. A. GINEVER.

DUBLIN, Stephen's Green West, 12, Rev. E. SAVELL HICKS, M.A.

EVESHAM, Oat-street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. W. E. WILLIAMS, B.A.

GATESHEAD, Unity Church, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. W. WILSON.

GET CROSS, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. H. PICKERING.

GORTON, Brookfield Church, 10.45 and 6.30.

GUILDFORD, Ward-street Church, North-street, 11 and 6.30, Mr. GEORGE WARD.

HASTINGS, South Terrace, Queen's-road, 11, Rev. Rev. S. BURROWS; 6.30.

HORSHAM, Free Christian Church, Worthing-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. J. MARTEN.

LEEDS, Mill Hill, 238th Anniversary, 10.45, Rev. MATTHEW R. SCOTT; 6.30, Service of Christmas Song.

LEICESTER, Free Christian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. K. H. BOND.

LEICESTER, The Great Meeting, 11 and 6.30, Rev. EDGAR I. FRIPP, B.A.

LIVERPOOL, Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, 11 and 6.30, Rev. C. CRADDOCK.

LIVERPOOL, Hope-street Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. H. D. ROBERTS.

LIVERPOOL, Ullet-road, Sefton-park, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. C. ODGERS, B.A.

MAIDSTONE, Unitarian Church, Earl-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. ALEXANDER FARQUHARSON.

MORETONHAMPSTEAD, Devon, Cross Chapel, 11 and 3, Rev. A. LANCASTER.

NEW BRIGHTON and LISCARD, Memorial Church, Manor-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. E. PARRY.

NEWPORT, Isle of Wight, Unitarian Church, High-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. RUDDLE.

OXFORD, Manchester College, 11.30, Rev. Dr. DRUMMOND.

PORTSMOUTH, High-street Chapel, 11 and 6.45.

PORTSMOUTH, St. Thomas-street, 6.45, Rev. T. BOND.

PRESTON, Unitarian Chapel, Church-street, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. C. TRAVERS.

SCARBOROUGH, Westborough, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. JOSEPH WAIN.

SEVENOAKS, Bessell's Green, The Old Meeting House, 11, Rev. J. F. PARMITER.

SHEFFIELD, Upper Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. C. J. STREET, M.A., LL.B.

SIDMOUTH, Old Meeting, High-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. WILLIAM AGAR.

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THE INQUIRER.

A Journal of Liberal Religion, Literature, and Social Progress.

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:: ST. FRANCIS AND THE :: :: FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS. ::



WE, who were with blessed Francis, and have written these things, bear testimony that many times we have heard him say, “If I were to speak to the Emperor, I would, suppliantly and persuading him, tell him for the love of God and me to make a special law that no man should take or kill sister Larks, nor do them any harm. Likewise, that all the Podestas of the towns, and the Lords of castles and villages, should be bound every year on Christmas day to compel men to throw wheat and other grains outside the cities and castles, that our sister Larks may have something to eat, and also the other birds, on a day of such solemnity. And that for the reverence of the Son of God, Who rested on that night with the most blessed Virgin Mary between an Ox and an Ass in the Manger, whoever shall have an Ox and an Ass shall be bound to provide for them on that night the best of good fodder. Likewise on that day all poor men should be satisfied by the rich with good food.” For the blessed Father had a greater reverence for Christmas day than for any other festival, saying, “Since the Lord had been born for us, it behoves us to be saved,” and on account of which he wished that on that day every Christian should rejoice in the Lord; and for His love who gave Himself for us, that all should provide largely not only for the poor, but also for the animals and birds.

THE MIRROR OF PERFECTION, Cap. cxiv.

MEN OF GOOD WILL.

THE great days, which the Christian Church has consecrated as festivals of commemoration, bring with them their special atmosphere. They enshrine in symbols of heavenly beauty or pathetic appeal some aspect of the Word of Life, and help to restore it in spiritual power to the soul. There is, it is true, no day on which the same lesson may not be learned, or the same impression revived with startling freshness. As we stand beneath the cross we can hear the “Gloria in excelsis,” and on Christmas Day we remember the sword which pierces the mother’s heart. For the life of the Christian soul is not a series of alternating moods or disconnected experiences, fitful as the sunshine and shadow of an April day; it is rather a ceaseless progress of insight into the meaning of love, love which is never divided against itself whether it lives to bless or dies to save. But we may none the less, at special moments of our life, or on the sacred days of the calendar, concentrate thought and emotion upon one word or sentence of the Eternal Gospel, as though it contained everything we need to learn or are in most danger of forgetting.

Among the deeply significant words which float through the mind at Christmas, we may select “Good Will” as one which has still many things to say to us. A note in the margin of the Revised Version informs the reader that the exact meaning of the passage in which the word occurs is “men of good pleasure,” i.e., men of the temper and disposition in which it is possible for God to be well pleased. This has led to the striking phrase in the Latin translation of St. Luke’s Gospel *Pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis*—“Peace to men of good-will.” This slight error may be forgiven for its deep suggestiveness. God’s message and gift of peace are not to the careless, or the evil, but to the heart in which the divine charity finds a dwelling-

place. The attitude of "good pleasure," the heavenly grace and benediction, require the good will in men themselves before they can be understood and possessed. The human response to the good tidings of Christmas is, above all, this, the will set to obey God's commandments, to cultivate the temper of charity and loving-kindness, and to avoid all occasions of bitterness or offence.

Life is full of splendid opportunities for men of good will; the making of peace in the earth, the healing of social injustice, the breaking down of false barriers of class, the growth of mutual tolerance and respect—these things are all largely in their hands. But there is one direction in which Christian men fail to try the great experiment of charity, and failure there seems to weaken their efforts and damage their sincerity everywhere else. We refer, sometimes, in tones of regret or despondency, to our "unhappy divisions," and our charity may even go so far as a cordial assent that the people who differ from us in matters of religion have a right to exist. But can it be said that our general attitude towards our religious opponents, the men of another church or denomination, is one of good will? Do we set ourselves heartily to try to understand them, to watch for opportunities of co-operation, and to magnify agreements? Every year there is an immense expenditure of money and energy upon denominational machinery, which is considered necessary for purposes of attack or defence. It tends inevitably to encourage a feeling of separateness, and possibly of superiority, and a grudging attitude towards the works of faith done by men, who follow not with us. Our bloated denominational armaments are not quite so creditable to us as we try to believe, and it is possible that the kind of "patriotism" which they tend to create has very little value for religion. Take a broad survey of the armed camps of the Christian Church to-day, and it is impossible to resist the impression that it is fairly easy to pass the standards of ecclesiastical drill or denominational efficiency, and yet to be indifferent to the deep things of God. The fire and force of religion will not disappear, when we shake ourselves free from these things and refuse to condemn one another any more. There may be a new type of earnestness, of which much that passes by this name in religious circles to-day is only the dim shadow or even the counterfeit. It is the privilege, not of our eager contestants, but of the men of good will to create it in our midst.

The Christmas message ought to purge our religion of narrowness, and to widen its horizons. It has lived too long in the heated atmosphere of its controversies or the narrow interiors of its dogmas. It needs the infinite spaces of the midnight sky, the stars, and the angels' song of One who came to heal and save. Above every

earthly gift, and beyond all party triumphs, are the healing of his grace and the blessing of his peace.

THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN PULPIT

THE COMING OF WINTER.

BY THE REV. L. P. JACKS, M.A.

LIKE the belated stragglers of a long vanished army, a few stray leaves may still be seen hanging disconsolate on the sheltered side of the woods. They are dead like the rest and the next high wind will bear them away. The glorious bravery of the trees has now become a sodden mass which sends up an odour of death. The green of field and hedgerow has changed to a dull but tender brown. The water lies in pools among the ploughed furrows; ways are wet and foul; the hard trodden path has become a rivulet of mud. The birds sit silent on the branches and shake the damp out of their feathers. No bursts of music herald the breaking of the tardy dawn. The chirp of the sparrow, the thin song of the robin, the quick staccato of the blackbird as he goes to his four o'clock roost are all that remain. The wayside tramp is pinched and blue; the sunburn has passed from his face. He sleeps no more upon his march; slouches no more upon the road; lingers no more by green pastures and still waters; but with hands dug deep into his empty pockets, and with thoughts intent upon the grim hospitality before him, he hurries on his way lest the night should overtake him too soon and the door of the casual ward be shut. Winter is here.

How swiftly the winter has come. It seems but yesterday that the sun shone full into our windows, while the town clocks struck three in the morning; now we hear it go four, five, six, seven, and still there is no lift in the blanket of the dark. It seems but yesterday that we timed the opening of the first buds of spring; that we inhaled the scent of new mown hay, that we listened to the reaper in the corn. But yesterday Nature looked upon us as it were with living eyes that laughed and sparkled with an inner light. Now we watch her sinking deeper and deeper into an impenetrable slumber; the mists and fogs spread their winding sheets around her; and a look of stolid death creeps over the face of the world.

As was the swiftness of summer so will be the swiftness of winter. Even now we hear the ceaseless beat of the wings of Time, and know that his flight is bearing us onward to summer days. As a thief the winter has come, and as a thief he will steal away. Yes, we must be up and doing, or the plans we made for winter work will have lost their chance, and the time will have come when people say, "the long days have arrived and it is too late to begin anything now." All seasons are equally good to the man who has found his business in life. The mind may be sad which thinks on the glory that is departed; the heart may be sick which remembers the beauty that is dead; to-day may be the shortest and the darkest of the whole year; but it has

one advantage over all days past and all days yet to come—that I happen to be alive with my work to do and my life to live.

That truth is decisive in the contest; but let us waive it altogether, and I will still contend that winter has charms which enable it to hold its own with any season of the year. Those charms are physical, but like all other physical things they are the language of spirit to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. I am not alluding to fireside happiness alone, though that also is one of the good gifts of God. In those things of beauty which are joys for ever winter is very rich; and these lovely things are none the less dear to the seeker of what is beautiful but all the dearer because they wear no scarlet and gold but weave a homespun dress of sober grey. Oh what exquisite beauty there is in the quietness, the modesty, of the winter grey! What subtle varieties, what swift and never-ending changes, what wonderful effects wrought out of the simplest material. It is a strange fact and one which betrays a narrow range of perception, that those who try to interpret the beauty of winter almost invariably fix their attention on the frost and snow. What a narrow and tyrannous tradition is that by which the writers of Christmas stories and the illustrators of Christmas books are tied down to their background of hoar frost and icicles. To please their fancy the world must be very white and very cold; nothing but extremes will satisfy their taste. But winter has other garments than her snow mantle, and other modes of adornment than freezing, by which she can clothe herself in beauty. She has adornments independent of frost, pleasures which have nothing to do with the physical re-action against cold, delights into which snow-whiteness enters not, and it is a thousand pities that so many persons seem to turn a blind eye to them all. In an English winter hard frost is rather the exception than the rule, and we may go for months with never a sight of snow and only just enough cold to justify the fire in the grate. In these mild winters, in these mild months of all winters, has the world no beauty to show us? Surely yes. What splendid days are those when the storm signals of God are uplifted in the sky and the firmament is all alive with marching hosts. All night long the wild west wind goes ramping and coursing through the troubled heavens. In the intervals of sleep we hear it, not without a sense of security, beating with vehement buffets on the sides of the house, and when the tardy dawn has broken, we look forth on the heavens and find nothing but a grey canopy of shifting cloud. Down comes the pelting rain, and hour after hour we may listen to the swish of the waters and the scurry of the blast. Towards noon there is a change, the hurly-burly seems to slacken, the gusts turn into a steady gale, the uniformity of the gloom is broken up, the dull heavens are shot through with arrows of light. Presently a great rent is torn across the sky, the grey clouds turn to white, and, rolling themselves into wonderful masses, sail off into space like swift and noble ships. How superb is the brief afternoon of such

a day ! There is a purity in the heavens that is well-nigh awful to look upon. In all the realm of nature there is no beauty so absolutely perfect, there is nothing which can so lift up the sin-stained soul of man, as the cleanliness of the wind-washed skies of a winter day. The light that bathes the earth at those times is the softest, the sweetest, the purest, that ever gladdens the human eye. And what a freshness there is. The breezes of summer have their delights, but they do not stir the pulses like these winter gales as they pour around us their depths of crystal air. They have crossed a thousand leagues of ocean, and the vigour of the mighty waters is in them ; they have swept over English meadows and sucked up the sweetness of the good brown earth. Wholesome and pleasant is it, while the sun is sinking in the short afternoon, to climb a little hill and wash our souls in the wind that comes streaming from the west. And when the night has fallen after a day of stormy weather, who shall say that the beauty of the winter-world is at an end ? If a man would know the luxury of being alive, let him take a country walk in the early hours of a long winter night. Let him go alone by preference, for the chatter of those that talk may spoil the charm. With no word to break the silence, let him gaze upon the architecture of the storm. Let him watch the great cloud-bastions that mask the setting sun. And when the twilight has quickly gone, let his soul be alive to feel something which is more wonderful than any object revealed by the light—I mean the infinite composure of the dark. The darkness will become individual to his apprehension ; it will be more than the absence of light ; it will be an active quality, nay a personal power, which fills him with a quiet joy and lifts his mind to a clearness of thought such as comes at no other time. As he walks on hour after hour, the heavens will pour upon him their deepest rest, the stars will look down upon him like a cloud of witnesses, and the very silence will be as a balm of mercy to his erring soul. Blessed by the silence and quickened by the wind, the dormant faculties of his spirit will start to attention, strange intuitions will rise up from the underworld of his buried life ; perhaps he will hear the beating of the Central Heart ; he will *feel* the vastness of the universe without seeing it ; the bonds of his egotism will be broken, the veil of his self-love will drop away, and, like a soul set free from the body, he will be at one with the majesty, the strength, the enduring wonder of the world.

I once heard a distinguished man, a dweller among the English Lakes, express his deep regret that so few people came to that lovely region when it wore its winter dress. I thought he was referring to snow-capped mountains ; but he quickly corrected me, and said, "Do you not know that the colours of the earth are at their fairest in winter time?" Then I knew what he meant. There is a richness and tenderness of colour in the bare earth which lies hidden beneath the vegetation of summer. Not till all that has passed away can we see those exquisitely sober hues to which the speaker was referring. In the brown earth, in the gray rocks, on the mossy trunks of trees, in the blackly

stencilled outlines of branch and twig, you may find harmonies and combinations which, when you see them in the soft and gracious light of a winter's day, and with the storm-washed blue of winter skies beyond, will wield a most powerful but subtle charm over your sense and your soul. And if you love beauty in its finest and most elusive forms, you will not be slow to observe the sweet odours of the winter earth. The scent which the upturned soil imparts to moisture laden winds is not the least among the luxuries of this season. By that strange law of association which governs the operation of scent it has, I believe, become interwoven with some of the deepest memories of Englishman. An exile from his native land wrote to me one Christmas in these terms : "Here, in N.W. Canada, our Christmas weather is very beautiful. The air is clear but intensely cold. We have uninterrupted sunshine day after day ; everything sparkles and glitters. But amid all this beauty there is one thing that I miss. What would I not give to get that whiff of the sweet earth which I so well remember in the old country. There is nothing I recall more vividly ; sometimes it comes over me all of a sudden, and then the whole of my English life comes back, and I begin to remember all sorts of things I had forgotten."

More might be said—much more—in praise of the less celebrated charms of winter. But I would only ask of you one thing, and that is, that when the parallel is drawn, the old common place parallel, between the decline of the year in winter, and the decline of life in old age, I would beg you to remember that aspect of winter of which I have spoken to-day, and let that be the key to the parallel. Leave out of the account those features of the winter which are everybody's hackney, forget the ice and the frost, think no more of the palsied figure shivering, of the embers of the fire, but think rather of that profound peace which accompanies the winter dawn, of that calm and exquisite light in the west which glorifies the earth in a winter afternoon, of that moving silence which makes the winter darkness into a thing of power. Mild is the winter of a good man's life. It is no icebound port to which the great Pilot is steering the weary ship. There is open water for the end of the voyage. The tide is flowing up the channel, a wet wind is blowing from the west, a "spring feel" is in the air, a soft light bathes the shore, and there is wonderful clearness in the distant hills. God grant such a winter to us all.

THE article on "The Influence of the Immortal Hope on the Life that now Is," by Prof. G. Dawes Hicks, which appeared recently in our columns, has been issued as a pamphlet by THE INQUIRER Publishing Company and may be obtained at 3, Essex-street.

WE hope to publish next week a New Year's Message by Prof. Eucken, of Jena. Dr. Ada Weinel, of Jena, will contribute an article on "The Woman's Movement in Germany and its Aims" early in the year.

SAINT SPIRIT'S.

(*In Stow's Survey of London, 1603, after the story of Essex House, which stood where Essex-street, Strand, is now, we read : "Then west was a Chapple dedicated to the Holy Ghost, called saint Spirit, uppon what occasion founded I have not read. Next is Milford lane, downe to the Thames. . . .")*

CHURCH of the Spirit, long ago
The fathers to thy shelter came,
And all their purest joys below
Were clustered round thy sacred name.

The mother brought her babe to thee
To seal it for the life divine,
Content, whatever else might be,
To know her child a child of thine.

The busy paused to seek thy peace,
Youth pressed to join the bridal throng,
The burdened sinner sought release,
The old man sang his Simeon song.

Days come and go—the walls decay
That love doth rear so white and fair ;
Where art thou now, and where are they
That sang the hymn and said the prayer ?

The shrine is gone, and they are dumb ;
Howe'er we listen, nevermore
Shall echo of their music come
Through pillared aisle and open door.

And yet across the waste of years,
The changing world, the deeps of death,
The spirit born within us hears
The word the Holy Spirit saith.

We too, by sweet compulsion led,
A shelter seek amid the strife,
And worship with the ages dead
The Giver and the Lord of Life.

W. G. TARRANT.

LIFE, RELIGION & AFFAIRS.

THE CHRISTMAS CANTOS OF "IN MEMORIAM."

THERE are three Yule-tides in this poem, and Tennyson has given to each its own distinctive note of mingled sadness and joy. And rarely have the differing moods, in which the approach of Christmas may find us, gained for themselves such clear and sufficing lyrical expression. Memory and hope ; the pathos of personal regret ; the longing for a golden age of "peace and good will to all mankind" ; the slow passing of the years, making the sense of loss less keen though not less profound—these, and the laughter and song of those who gather under the old roof-tree to keep the festal hours, find their place in the poet's many-voiced lament. It is good to read, in close succession, these six stanzas (28-30, 76, 104 and 105, the last leading on to the great chant for New Year's Eve). A living and intense human experience appeals to us there, of significance to the common heart of man.

In the first three we get the sense of the poet's own great sorrow, unrelieved as yet by the healing influence of time and thought. It is Christmas Eve ; and in the autumn of that same year, tidings of the

death of his friend—the great and dear friend of his youth—had come, and left him desolate. The shadow of that loss lay dark across the ways; and when “The Christmas bells from hill to hill Answer each other in the mist,” he confesses that he almost wished his “hold on life to break,” before he heard them again. Yet now that he hears them, though for him they strike the note of sorrow, it is sorrow “touch’d with joy.” For as, through the still night, they “ring their changes on the wind,” he cannot fail to hear that nobler music to which the human heart is never wholly deaf. They tell of blessing and of hope for men, and he is not so absorbed in his own grief as to be indifferent to that. Across the wide sad world, these “merry bells of Yule” take up the old refrain, “Peace and good will to all mankind.” So it becomes possible to make merry with the rest, to join in the festal games, to sing the old songs. Though “with trembling fingers” they weave the holly, and with something like “*pretence* of gladness” they gambol at old pastimes, half conscious of “one mute shadow watching all,” yet the thought of some vaster good, and the hope they cherish for those who now are “rapt from the fickle and the frail,” make mirth and song not all unreal to them. “ *Sadly fell our Christmas Eve*; but the new day shall be greeted with courage:—

“Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from
night:

O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was
born.”

In the single stanza which tells of the following Christmas Eve, the mood has changed, and a different note is heard. The grief is still there, but it has been chastened—softened or subdued to a serenity of tenderness not reached before. Not “sadly” now, but “calmly fell our Christmas Eve.” Nature, too, is in sympathy with the altered human feeling. A year before, the season was ushered in by storm and stress of weather. “A rainy cloud possessed the earth.” “The winds were in the beech; we heard them sweep the winter land.” But now, “The silent snow possessed the earth.” “No wing of wind the region swept, But over all things brooding slept The quiet sense of something lost.” Within the house there is no attempt at boisterous mirth. The old household games, with dance and song, have place as of yore, but soberly; there is no “vain pretence of gladness,” but also no weeping, no outward sign of grief. And then, for a moment, there comes on the poet’s heart the sense of that last of all regrets—that “regret can die”! Have we forgotten? Can we so soon take life as if so great a friendship had not suffered loss? Can one brief year make love oblivious to grief? Few who have known great sorrow will be strange to that experience; we chide ourselves for feeling the sorrow less, or seeming to have forgotten. That plaint can hardly be more finely expressed, and *answered*, than in these lines:—

“O last regret, regret can die!

No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.”

Time that tempers sorrow does not harden feeling, does not lessen affection, does not make the heart less faithful to the old friendship. But the loss has become part of the life now—“mixed with all this mystic frame.” Love’s grief has wrought itself into the finer texture of the soul, and so has ceased to be a riotous and disturbing element there; joy may come back, and, with chastened feeling, reassert its claim. Life can never be as once, before it had known such large, irrevocable loss; but it may be glad with a finer and more spiritual gladness. We cannot play with the children or dance with youth and maiden, as once we could; but we *can* play, and we ought, with a heart still nobly capable of mirth.

In this canto the purely personal note alone is heard; it is the simple lyric voice of the soul’s inmost feeling, under the refining influence of sorrow, which has become a part of one’s deepest life, and is no longer antagonistic to joy.

A quite different mood finds expression in the verses which belong to the third and last Christmas Eve. For now the poet has left the scenes of youth and early manhood. The old home is broken up:—

“Our Father’s dust is left alone.

And silent under other snows.”

In the stranger’s land the very bells that peal through the moonless night have an alien sound. And so, not sadly, not calmly, but “strangely falls our Christmas Eve.” And there is no attempt to keep up the ancient customs, as in former years. “For change of place, like growth of time, Has broke the bond of dying use.” But observe how, with the break-up of the narrower family interests, there comes again, in stronger force, the thought of large human interests. This year, in the new home, they cannot sing or play or feast, as of old. Yet not in dulness or in gloom shall the festive season pass. The vision of the good that is to be, for all mankind, lifts the heart above its own personal griefs. The new and happier age, sung by the mystic host, on a still night, long ago, is surely near at hand; the stars proclaim it, as they rise in the east, above the woodland there. For now, amid unfamiliar scenes, where “all is new unhallowed ground,” with the old-time revelries discarded, nature—the moonless, starlit winter night—lays the power of its enchantment on the musing poet’s soul, and he sees the great days soon to dawn:—

“No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east
Of rising worlds by yonder wood.

Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.”

And then follows the great impassioned song for New Year’s Eve—the appeal to the bells to speak their message of hope to all the world—to “Ring in redress for all mankind.” And such, surely, is the nobler spirit in which to rise above “the grief that saps the mind For those that here we see no more”—to merge our sense of personal loss, which a festive season may revive so keenly, in thoughts and hopes of human progress—the vision of that great joy which the spirit of “the Christ that is to be” shall bring to a struggling and ascending world.

W. J. J.

A LAY RETREAT.

THE Cistercian abbey of Pontigny, on the frontier of Champagne and Burgundy, in what is now the Department of the Yonne, has historical associations for Englishmen. Two Archbishops of Canterbury have been its guests; Thomas Becket spent there some part of his exile, and there Edmund Rich came to end his days. The embalmed body of the latter, clothed in the pontifical vestments, is still in its shrine behind the high altar of the abbey church, where it can be inspected by the curious tourist for the sum of one franc.

The stately church, in the purest and most severe Cistercian style still dominates the valley. It is a church after St. Bernard’s own heart, without a scrap of sculpture or ornament anywhere; very different from the luxurious magnificence of Vézelay, some forty miles off, which moved the saint to indignation. Only the huge choir is now habitually used, and that is more than large enough to accommodate the small proportion of the women and children of the parish who attend Mass on Sundays; the men unanimously refrain.

This church, however, which, with all its beauty of form and proportion, feels like the tomb of a religion, is not all the abbey of Pontigny. The monastic buildings, which touch it, are alive again with a new intellectual and spiritual life. Some few years ago, after the suppression of a modern religious congregation which had occupied them, they were acquired by M. Paul Desjardins, the moving spirit of the *Union pour la Vérité*, not for mere personal enjoyment, but with the object of realising a cherished scheme. Last summer a series of five “*Entretiens d’été*,” each lasting ten days, was organised; the first was concerned with oppressed nationalities, the second with the art of the Middle Ages, the third with religion, the fourth with the social question, and the last with modern poetry. It was in the third that the present writer had the privilege of taking part. The term “privilege” is not used in a mere conventionally polite sense; few periods in my life have been of so great spiritual and intellectual profit or have passed so happily.

Much will be lost by inevitable change, if we cannot appropriate and adapt all that is sensible and useful in the external usages and the practical methods of religious systems that are passing away, no less than in their spiritual heritage. The “retreat” is one of these methods; it is good at times to withdraw ourselves from the world of business and pleasure, from our ordinary surroundings and occupations, and to retire into some quiet spot, there to meditate on subjects for which we have usually little time and to converse with kindred spirits. Our retreat at Pontigny bore little external resemblance to its prototypes. We had, indeed, a director in M. Desjardins, without whose imperceptible guidance the venture could not have been the success that it was; but we had no set discourses, no “exercises,” and practically no rules.

Every afternoon there was a discussion, or, more accurately, a conversation on some subject connected with religion,

which lasted about an hour and a half. These conversations were intensely interesting, for we were a score of men and women of various convictions ; there were freethinkers (one or two materialists, others not), Protestants, Catholics (of the "modernist" type), and one clergyman of the Church of England. Yet, in spite of our differences, we had a bond of unity in a common spirit, and we found, as one always finds among men of good will, that the points of agreement outnumbered the differences. The subjects of our conversations were chosen almost at random on the suggestion of individuals. A distinguished professor of the Collège de France opened a conversation on the possibility of teaching in schools the history of religion. We talked about the necessity or otherwise of preserving a "cult" (*i.e.*, some form of external worship), and were almost unanimously agreed as to its necessity. We asked ourselves and one another how much it will be possible to preserve of existing Christian belief and practice. As the majority of us were Frenchmen, the special difficulties of France were naturally talked about ; difficulties arising from the fact that, for most Frenchmen, there is no choice between Catholicism, which they have rejected, and no religion at all, and that the Catholic form of worship seems more difficult to adapt to new conditions than the Protestant, which, on the other hand, does not appeal to most Latins. Can the Mass, for instance, be preserved, if it comes to be generally recognised as pure symbolism ? It seems doubtful.

These and other more intimate questions were the subjects of our general conversations. But perhaps these general conversations, interesting as they were, were not the most valuable part of the "Entretiens d'été." Even more valuable was the intercourse and fellowship with strangers who soon became friends. The rapidity with which mutual confidence and sympathy were achieved was remarkable ; one looks back with pleasure at many a fruitful talk in the beautiful garden or in the course of a country walk. And the concentration of one's attention, for a brief period, on the question which is after all the supreme question, was invaluable. For the time being, the outside world was forgotten in a sense, although the future of the world was the vast question involved in our conversations.

The internationalism aimed at in these gatherings was not fully achieved in the religious decade, at which only France, England, and Belgium were represented. But the first decade was really international. There were representatives of Finland, the Polands, and Alsace-Lorraine, who met together to consult with Frenchmen and others as to how they could help one another in their common struggle against oppression. And this decade had a very practical result ; not only were methods adopted for keeping the oppressed nationalities in touch with one another, but also for spreading information in other countries. Correspondents have been found all over France, to whom authentic information will be supplied, and who have undertaken to make it known by every means in their power. It is hoped that similar correspondents will be found in England. They

are needed on account of the unwillingness of a large proportion of the press, for political and other reasons, to publish the truth about the methods of the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian Governments in dealing with their conquered provinces. In many cases it will be possible to publish in the press the information supplied, which will come from entirely trustworthy sources and be carefully checked. Where that is not possible, it can be spread abroad in others ways, if only in conversation. Neither the French nor the English public has any adequate conception of the persecution to which the inhabitants of Poland and Alsace-Lorraine are subjected by Russia and Prussia ; the abominable treatment of Finland has recently attracted more attention, but the European press, as a whole, has treated it with callous indifference.

It is intended to make the "Entretiens d'été" at Pontigny a permanent institution, and the best proof of the success of the first series is that the majority of those who attended them have already inscribed their names for next year. It is to be feared that the old Cistercians would not recognise as their successors those who paced this summer the vast hall under whose vaulted roof Thomas Becket and Edmund Rich once walked. But, for all that, we were vain enough to think that we were not entirely unworthy successors of men who tried, according to their lights, to serve their day and generation. No man can do more.

ROBERT DELL.

AMERICAN NOTES.

REV. C. W. WENDTE, D.D.

EX-PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT's recent political defeat in his own State of New York, and the election by a large majority of a Democratic Governor and Legislature, instead of the Republican candidates for whom Mr. Roosevelt conducted so strenuous a campaign, is to be attributed to many causes. Among these were the alarmed opposition of the moneyed classes which his "insurgent," *i.e.* ultra-radical, opinions had aroused ; the general disgust at the revelations of corruption among the Republican politicians which Mr. Roosevelt himself had unveiled ; the intrigues of these discredited party leaders seeking in turn to revenge themselves upon him ; Mr. Roosevelt's own indiscretion as a political leader, &c. But one reason for his temporary overthrow has not been made public—the defection of the Roman Catholic element, whose votes he once assiduously courted, but which his famous quarrel with the late U.S. Minister to Italy, Bellamy Storer, and Mrs. Storer—both ardent converts to Roman Catholicism—and his more recent break with the Vatican authorities because of the manly stand he had taken with respect to the Methodist Missions in Rome, had alienated. In New York the Irish and German Catholic vote is very strong, and unquestionably was cast against the party of the ex-President. In the long run every statesman who attempts to curry favour with Rome is discomfited. Rome desires vassals not allies. In all she seeks only her own aggrandisement.

Just now President Taft is *persona grata* with the Vatican, because of the aid he rendered the Church in securing a large sum in requital for the seizure of the extensive Friar lands in the Philippines, and his subsequent respectful visits to Pope Pius X. Should he ever venture, however, to assert his own or his country's rights against the Roman interests, he will speedily be disowned by the Church authorities, and learn the folly and danger of countenancing the worldly ambitions and political schemes of the Roman See. American politicians of the better sort have yet this lesson to learn, a lesson which their European contemporaries have acquired by bitter experience. As for the lower grade of professional politicians, they court the favour of the Church from purely selfish considerations, and so equally do the alarmed moneyed interests of the United States, who are beginning to find in the Roman Priesthood a bulwark against social readjustments and levelling schemes, and a safeguard for the interests of property and privilege. Just now they are rejoicing over the recent severe denunciation of Socialism by the Catholic clergy of the United States. The latter may yet find, however, that in the end this may cost them dearly, and alienate from them millions whom a milder, juster policy might have retained in their communion. As it is now the acceptance of Socialistic ideals implies the denial of the authority of the Church, and the latter is likely to lose in America an even greater number of its children than the unprecedented immigration from Europe has recently brought under its influence. This is especially true of the Italians, Bohemians, Hungarians, and the Slavic races, who constitute the bulk of the immigration nowadays, and are peculiarly amenable to the earnest Socialistic propaganda being brought to bear upon them.

In this connection it should be noted that the Commission appointed by President Taft to inquire into the present condition of immigration into the United States have just rendered a report. They advise restricting the entrance of unskilled labourers into the United States for a term of years, and a careful investigation into the methods of steamship companies and other transportation agencies by which this emigration is artificially promoted far beyond the needs of the labour market, and with many resultant evils both to the American working man and the immigrants themselves.

A movement has been started to place a portrait of the late Mrs. Julia Ward Howe in Faneuil Hall, the ancient "Cradle of Liberty" in Boston. It already contains likenesses of Washington, Lincoln, the Adams, Daniel Webster, Wendell Phillips, Governor Andrew, Edward Everett, and other great men of the Republic, so that the inclusion of Mrs. Howe's would be a distinction, especially as she would be the first woman to be thus honoured. The portrait is to be painted by her son-in-law, John W. Elliott, a painter of repute, and paid for by popular subscription. The frame is to be inscribed simply "Julia Ward Howe : Author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic." A committee of eminent persons in the community, the present Governor of the State, and several ex-

Governors and the Mayor of Boston among them, has been formed to carry out the plan. It is designed to unveil the picture at a public meeting, with memorial addresses, musical selections of her own composing, and the singing of her famous hymn by the audience. A similar movement is on foot to do honour to the illustrious husband of Mrs. Howe, Samuel Gridley Howe, whose philanthropic and humanitarian labours form one of the brightest chapters in our history. A public playground sloping down to the sea, in the near neighbourhood of the Blind Asylum in South Boston, to which he gave so many years of his life, has been secured. It will ultimately contain a bronze and granite memorial, with effigies of Dr. Howe, and probably also of his wife.

The recent death of the aged founder of the Christian Science Church, Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, has made but little impression on the community; it had been so long foreseen. Her movement will go on for the present under the same auspices to which it has been committed for some years past, a syndicate of business men and lawyers unknown to fame, and modestly concealing their prominence in the affairs of the new cult. Indeed, nothing is more noticeable than the entire absence in the membership, and especially the administration, of this new sect, of any persons of distinction in the community. The newspaper comments on Mrs. Eddy's death are nearly all kindly. Her age and long retirement from the active conduct of affairs, and the bewilderment caused in the mind of the average editor by her success in amassing a large fortune, account for this. But it is not likely that the large property and personal interests involved will long permit the undisturbed rule of the present régime. Dissensions are already foreshadowed, while the intensely arbitrary and autocratic nature of the present rule, the most tyrannous ecclesiasticism in the Christian world to-day, will not much longer be accepted by its membership. The changes which time will inevitably bring in their organisation will be in the interest of larger freedom and rationality, and are to be welcomed. In the opinion of many good judges, this movement has already reached the maximum of its influence, and will presently relapse into one more of the many sects which modern Christianity presents, and which indicate the disintegration of the old order and doctrine and the birth-throes of a new and needed spiritual faith and philosophy of religion. That Christian Science could ever become such no competent thinker who has even examined its scripture, "The Science of Health," or read Miss Milmine's veracious biography of its founder, would find it possible to believe. But it offers its protest against a gross materialism of thought and life, it presents a cheerful optimism, and emphasises the power of the spirit in man. It is one more phase, however distorted, of the present "New Thought" movement in behalf of a more spiritual form of religious faith. In any case, as Coleridge tells us, no one should be so unwise and uncharitable as utterly to condemn any form of faith, however crude, when it is likely that it is only a partial refraction of some great dawning truth that has not yet risen above the horizon.

The recent Centenary Meetings in Chicago in honour of Theodore Parker were very notable. Under the inspiring leadership of Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Rabbi Emil Hirsch, and others, a series of gatherings was held for nearly a week in churches avowedly orthodox, as well as liberal, and in public halls, as well as at Miss Jane Addams' famous settlement, Hull House, and the great Abraham Lincoln Centre, which stands as Mr. Jones' monument, typifying and continuing his forty-five years of public ministry in Chicago. The proceedings are to be printed in book form. This will presumably be the last of the notable series of commemorative meetings which have been held all over the world in honour of Parker, and which form a remarkable testimony to his continued influence as an ethical and religious teacher. It would not be surprising if Parker's day was yet to come in so-called orthodox circles, and that he should yet prove a religious emancipator and inspirer among them through the story of his life and the kindling power of his lofty faith.

The printed proceedings, reports, programmes and other memoranda concerning these Parker meetings are to be preserved in a special collection, and placed in the Parker Archives of the Boston Public Library. The present writer requests that all such printed material be sent him for this purpose. The fourteenth and final volume of the new Centenary edition of Parker's writings, issued by the American Unitarian Association, is now going through the press. It will contain also a quite complete bibliography of his writings, and of writings about him, as well as a full index to his works. There still remain unpublished some 900 manuscript sermons, and a large collection of letters, as well as the unprinted part of his diaries. Probably a volume of his correspondence may be issued at some future day, as well as a reprint of O. B. Frothingham's Life, of which the American Unitarian Association now holds the plates.

The American Unitarian Association has issued a special appeal for £1,600 to be expended for its international work. It instances the World Congress of Free Christians, the wide advertisement of its principles and publications in foreign journals, a proposed Unitarian mission in Italy, a grant to the work of the Brahmo-Somaj in India, and the erection of a suitable chapel in Poland to shelter the now neglected and shattered tomb of Faustus Socinus, as among the causes it seeks to advance.

The invitation extended to Rev. John Hunter, of Glasgow, to become the Dean of the Tufts College (Universalist) Theological School, in Boston, meets with a hearty second from our Unitarian churches and ministers. Under his scholarly, broad-minded, and deeply religious administration the school in question would become increasingly a power for liberal and spiritual Christianity. Dr. Hunter would be warmly welcomed by our ministers and churches.

The *Brooklyn Eagle* is printing every Monday a broadside of sermons by prominent ministers of that "City of Churches," among them a series on religious philosophy by Rev. C. S. S.

Dutton the talented successor in the pulpit of the late John W. Chadwick. Another series is by Dr. Samuel Parkes Cadman, pastor of the Central Congregational Church, whose topics are Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley, John Stuart Mill, James Martineau, Matthew Arnold, George Eliot. This may throw a favourable light on the present methods of the American pulpit and press.

THE COMING OF SANTA CLAUS.

"SANDY," I said, "suppose you tell me something about a bygone Christmas in these parts."

I knew when Sandy brought out his beloved clay pipe that my suggestion met with his full approval. He lived almost entirely in the past. Kings might come and kings might go, but Sandy paid no attention to the wagging of a busy and progressive world.

"Christmas ain't wot it useter be," began Sandy. "There ain't the goodwill 'bout it now'days. I 'ate to speak agin Natur, but I mus' say as 'ow Natur don't do 'er dooty in the way o' snow at the right time as she did w'en I was a lad. We 'ad snow in them days I can tell 'ee, an' olly so thick as peas in a pod. I call to mind one partiklar Christmas wot be more like a fairy tale than anythin' else, but being a God-fearin' man I don't tell no fairy tales.

"W'en I was a lad a very coorius ole gentleman came an' lived in that big ramblin' 'ouse on the top o' the 'ill yonder. Folks useter say quare thin's about 'im. Some said as 'ow 'e was a magician; some as 'ow 'e was a halchemist, a probin' inter mysteries so deep an' awful as the sea. No matter wot time o' night or early marnin' you 'appened to look up at 'is 'ouse, there was always a light burnin'. As 'e always 'ad 'is blinds up, some o' the more coorius 'oomen-folk useter up-along an' take a peep at 'im. They 'ud see 'im sittin' in a easy chair afore a roarin' fire wi' a book on 'is wobblin' knees so big as a fam'ly Bible, 'is beady eyes pressed close agin the print, a-readin' an' larfin' an' growlin' by turn. I up-along once myself, and I seed 'im standin' afore a paintin' of a little chile. 'E was lookin' at that pictur through 'is girt glasses in a way I've never seed afore. There was a wonnderful smile on 'is ole face. Then, all o' a sudden, the smile went away, an' tears ran be'ind 'is girt glasses. Nobody knew nothin' about 'im. 'E passed among us wi'out a word. 'E did 'is walkin' mostly early in the marnin' an' late o' night. 'E 'ad a 'orrid shuffle o' a walk, an' went about wi' a long cape an' big black 'at pulled well down over 'is eyes. Most folks was skeered o' 'im. Mothers would snatch their childer away w'en they saw 'im comin', afraid that 'e 'ad the Evil Eye. But childer was never frightened o' 'im. They seemed to see in 'im somethin' that nobody else could see. They wanted to play wi' 'im. They took 'is 'and, an' more than once, w'en 'e 'ad the chance, a sobbin' chile would lie peaceful in 'is arms.

"W'en Christmas came round me an' t'other men wot played in the parish church

—a soul-raisin' institootion wot's died out now—we 'ummed an' 'awed as to w'ether or no us should gi'e the ole gentleman a carol on Christmas Eve. Argymtent ran 'igh an' strong. Some folks said as 'ow the 'eathen ougther 'ear sacred moosic w'en people was kind o' 'eart, an' other folks said as 'ow 'is black art would make us play a barn dance and devil moosic. 'Twas Adams, the cobbler, wot turned the tide. 'It's my opinion,' ses 'e, 'that that ole gentleman be mighty fond o' childer, and if a man be fond o' childer, 'tis certain sure 'e's got 'is 'eart in the right place.' No one could gainsay Adams. Gainsayin' Adams meant a pair o' boots 'eld back w'en men most wanted 'em. So we tooned up our instruments an' traipsed up the 'ill to the ole gentleman's 'ouse, our lanterns swingin' an' our tongues a-waggin' about to-morrer's doin's.

"We went inter the ole gentleman's garding, an' there took up our stand. I was the youngest among the moosicians. Adams knew 'ow to make an' mend a pair o' boots, but 'e made a pore business o' playin' the clar'net. 'E 'ad no ear for moosic. W're us others was playin' soft as a babblin' brook, 'cordin' to instructions, Adams was blarin' away on 'is clar'net like a maniac. Frowns an' growns only made 'im play the louder. 'E would begin first an' end last, an' there was no correctin' a man like Adams. Pore soul! 'E's gone now, and may be 'e's exchanged 'is clar'net for a 'eavenly 'arp.

"Well, us struck up a carol, an' considerin' Adams's playin' an' a man's serpent wot cracked an' split its notes somethin' terr'ble, we didn't do so badly. Arter we'd finished we waited for the ole gentleman to pop out 'is head, thank us, wi' or wi'out a offerin', an' wish us a merry Christmas. But the ole gentleman didn't appear. Then we did a bit o' corfin'. I mind that corfin' well. We cleared our throats a dozen times till it 'urt us to clear 'em any more. Then ole Adam ses, wi' sorasm fit to knock the 'ouse down, 'O' the makin' o' books there's no end, as Scriptur tells us, an' 'ee may depend on't that wicked ole gentleman's got 'is nose glued to a tome o' un'oly lore, not mindin' a rap for the beauties o' the clar'net surpored by t'other instruments.'

"We 'ad 'ardly started playin' a second carol w'en we sees the front door open an' a sight fit to take our breath away. We all stopped playin'. Even ole Adams, wot was enjoyin' the thrill o' a 'igh note not mentioned in the moosic, snatched 'is instrument from 'is mouth an' gaped in wonder. A girt 'ush fell on us as we seed a bent figure in a red robe wi' w'ite trimmin's comin' down the drive. 'E carried over 'is shoulder a 'uge sack jus' bulgin' out in all directions. There was a smile on 'is face wot was the 'appiest smile I've ever seed. 'Is eyes twinkled be'ind 'is spectacles, as 'e said, 'Santa Claus wishes 'ee all a merry Christmas, an' 'earty thanks for moosic in honour o' the Babe o' Bethlehem. I 'ope 'ee will come in an' partake o' a little refreshment I 'ave provided. . . . I go yonder w'ere the childer are. 'Tis a busy night for Santa Claus!'

"Wi' that the ole gentleman disappeared, an' if it 'adn't been for Adams we should never 'ave gone into the 'ouse

an' sat down to a spread fit for the mightiest in the land.

"The ole gentleman was the very spirit o' Christmas that night. 'E went to the door o' every 'ome, 'appy most w'en 'e stood afore a 'umble dwellin'. W'en 'e'd gained admission, 'e crept to w're childer lay smilin' in their sleep. Mothers who 'ad once feared 'im stood an' watched 'im wi' 'appy faces as 'e tied stockin's full o' good thin's to little beds. W'rever 'e went 'e was received wi' glad 'earns an' a ringin' cry of 'God bless 'ee! A merry Christmas!' 'E told one 'ooman that 'e 'ad once 'ad a little girl o' 'is own. Said 'e, 'She loved an' believed in Santa Claus, an' I do it in remembrance o' 'er.'

"That was a Christmas morn for the young 'uns, I can tell 'ee! They talked o' nothin' else save o' Santa Claus. Then some one said as 'ow Santa Claus 'ad left Lapland an' come to live in the big 'ouse on the 'ill. No sooner was the noos spread w'en all the childer went up-along to the mansion on Christmas Day to thank 'im. My word! That was a ole gentleman wi' a 'eart o' gold 'erusted wi' dimints! No sooner did 'e 'ear the childers' voices w'en 'e swung open the door an' cried, 'In, in, all o' 'ee! Santa Claus gi'es a party to-night!'"

F. HADLAND DAVIS.

QUESTIONS AT ISSUE.

[Under this heading writers discuss freely from their own point of view living problems of Religion, Ethics, and Social Reform, but the Editor does not assume responsibility for the opinions expressed.]

"THE CHRIST-MYTH."

I.

It is not my intention to reply to Dr. Anderson's abuse of a distinguished liberal Christian scholar, for Dr. Carpenter's strong shoulders will not be sensitive to these somewhat pettish thumps, and, as THE INQUIRER justly observes, that style of writing puts an end to profitable discussion; and, indeed, not only to profitable, but to all discussion, for every judgment on a disputed point involves the assumption that your judgment is better than some one else's, and if this is a proof of arrogance and conceit, the only resource for our modesty is a complete scepticism, and a resolution never to express an opinion at all. But then, alas! what will become of Dr. Anderson's own judgment, which at present seems to be pretty stiff against his neighbour?

In view, however, of the recent cant about the destruction of liberal Christianity, it may be of advantage for some of your readers who are not technical theologians, to point out that the hypothesis which Dr. Anderson champions would, if established, be far less destructive to liberal than to orthodox Christianity. The belief in the perfect (*i.e.*, complete) humanity of Jesus of Nazareth is a fundamental article of the orthodox creed. An early Christian represents the denial that Jesus came in the flesh as proceeding from the spirit of Antichrist (1 John iv. 3). This was understood as asserting his real, as

distinct from an apparent humanity. And again and again the reality of this human nature is insisted upon, and, after centuries of controversy, it was affirmed in the most express terms by the Council of Chalcedon. On this point, then, the orthodox and the Unitarian are absolutely at one. The difference between them lies in the mode of conceiving the relation of the man Jesus to God. Orthodoxy has laid down a carefully defined, though incomprehensible, theory that the two natures, the human and the divine, while each retaining its own will and its own consciousness, were nevertheless combined in the unity of one person, so that what is predicated of one may be predicated of the other. This hypostatic union was regarded as absolutely unique in kind; and this marking off of Jesus from all other men was expressed by saying that he was Son of God by nature, whereas other men could become sons of God only by adoption. The Unitarian, while unable to accept this solution, has no fixed theory of the mode of union between the divine and the human. I think Unitarians would probably say universally that the difference in this respect between Jesus and other men was one of degree, and not of kind. Many, probably most, if not all, would say that he was so deeply conscious of the indwelling of God that he felt himself impelled to a Divine mission, and to be in word and deed an organ of the Divine will, though this interpenetration with the Spirit of God did not wholly exempt him from the conditions and thoughts of his time and country. In the foregoing statement of the orthodox position I rely on the official documents; but I am well aware that many men, who are considered orthodox, hold a greatly modified opinion, and that sometimes the approximations between the two views are very close, so that these views differ more in phraseology than in substance.

But the point to be emphasised at present is that the real existence and true humanity of Jesus are corner stones in the orthodox system. If there was no historical Jesus, then there was no incarnation, no crucifixion, and consequently no atonement, no saving blood, no merits, and the whole orthodox theology, whether Catholic or Protestant, becomes simply a dead mythology.

But liberal Christianity would not necessarily share this fate. For one form which it has assumed represents the essence of Christianity as consisting of the truths which Jesus taught. This was expressed long ago by Theodore Parker in the startling words that, if Christianity were true at all, it would be just as true if Herod or Catiline had taught it. This statement clearly implies that Christianity is a system of spiritual truth, which, when once the world has acquired it, is wholly independent of its historical origin. This view does not appear to me adequate or satisfying, but it has been held by earnest and thoughtful liberal Christians, and would remain unimpaired if the whole of primitive Christianity could be resolved into Oriental myth. Of course, the orthodox also could retain this valuable portion of Christianity; but the orthodox system would have become a heap of archæological ruins.

II.

SOME general reflections suggested by Dr. Anderson's letter may, I think, make for peace. The most serious obstacle, perhaps the only really serious obstacle, which the champions of any attack upon "established" beliefs or institutions of any kind have to fear is a conspiracy of silence. There is always a wide public open to them, but what they want is to break into the circle of complaisant acceptance of the orthodox tradition. The "established" exponents of any branch of knowledge are persons accepted as guides by the body of serious students, and as authorities by the body of intelligent inquirers, and as long as these "established" persons ignore attacks on their position it is exceedingly difficult to shake it. The assailants may number thousands or hundreds of thousands without making any impression on the body of educated opinion, but as soon as ever they begin to be noticed, however unfavourably, in the standard works, or by the acknowledged authorities on the subject, their greatest difficulty is overcome, and they will soon be heard on their merits. An area of controversy has been defined. The outer fringe of opinion, which is still *in statu nascendi*, as the chemists say, not yet committed but keenly searching for the track of truth, is for the first time penetrated, and the new doctrine has its chance. Now Professor Carpenter is conspicuous amongst "established" Biblical scholars for his systematic recognition of the existence of the body of opinion which Dr. Anderson considers so important. Many of us who are working on other lines, and only throw occasional side-glances on the progress of New Testament research, owe it to him that we are aware of the persistency and volume of this revolutionary thought. And if Dr. Drews, for example, would avail himself of the hospitality which I am sure you would offer him in your columns, we should follow with the keenest interest his defence or explanation of any of the points which Professor Carpenter has attacked. Without being experts, and in spite of all our natural pre-judgments, we should receive an impression of a certain value as to his *prima facie* case against the justice of Professor Carpenter's article. I maintain, therefore, that even if Dr. Anderson were right in his conception of Professor Carpenter as a hide-bound pedant and an interested apologist, fighting for his spiritual and ecclesiastical life (!), he ought nevertheless to be profoundly grateful to him.

May I say in conclusion, that the one point in Dr. Anderson's letter which struck me as having real value, is the information which he gives us that Mr. Robertson has dealt with Professor Carpenter's criticisms (in the "First Three Gospels") in detail in his new edition of "Christianity and Mythology." No doubt readers of THE INQUIRER will turn with quickened interest to the passages in question if the volume comes in their way. It is just such direction to crucial points that the busy man desires.

PHILIP H. WICKSTEED.

Childrey, near Wantage.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents. LETTERS CANNOT BE INSERTED WITHOUT THE WRITER'S NAME, and all private information should be accompanied by the name and address of the senders.]

AN EXTENDED LECTINARY.

SIR,—I am glad Mr. Connell has continued the discussion of the question as to the advisability of enlarging the lectionary in religious services, but am disappointed that no one but myself has taken part in it, as there are many more competent than I who might do so with advantage to the liberal churches, in broadening their spiritual outlook, and nourishing their religious and ethical needs. We all know the deadening effect of repeated reiteration; not confined, I venture to affirm, to common-place things and thoughts.

No one, I believe, wishes to displace the canonical Scriptures from their long-established place in our services, but I fail to see how their place therein is affected by additions from other sources of a like elevating character.

Mr. Connell is willing to admit Christian writings of mediæval and modern times, but rejects the sacred and ethical literature of all nations save those which have embraced Christianity, on the ground that such have not "found their way into the deep places of our hearts, except, perhaps, in certain isolated instances." This is certainly a *naïve* argument, for how can they find their way into our hearts if they are systematically tabooed?

As to the practical question, how many volumes the minister is to use in the introductory part of the service, there is room for a difference of opinion, both on the ground of mere convenience and of their content. The Bible as a whole may be retained by those who wish it; but I am mistaken if there are not a large number who would prefer a selection even from it. What edification is obtainable from the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and many of the minor Prophets?

Hoping that the serious and important subject now broached may obtain notice from your readers, and be followed by letters from influential members of the churches who are readers of and writers in THE INQUIRER, I am yours, &c.,

W. C. COUPLAND.

33, Pembroke-crescent, Hove,
December 18, 1910.

SIR,—There were recently some letters advocating an extended lectionary in our churches, which movement I wish to support in the interest of still greater helpfulness in our services. Our ministers—in all our free service churches—select what prayers they find helpful out of the world's liturgies. They generally also have a large variety of hymns to choose from, but when it comes to the reading of what are called the lessons, they at present, almost without exception, select passages from the books of the Authorised or Revised Old and New Testaments only, thus refusing to make use of any writings, however beautiful, spiritual, and helpful, older than say 200 A.D.! This bald state-

ment of the general custom in our churches should give rise for serious consideration of our position. We, who rightly, for the most part, take pride in our liberality of thought, practically boycott the writings of our most saintly, most spiritual leaders, because they happened to live after 200 A.D.!

When most people could not read for themselves, and when the accurate knowledge of the books of the Bible was considered necessary for salvation, this custom grew up, but now that circumstances have in our churches so entirely changed, surely the time has arrived for availing ourselves of the religious and ethical literature of the world for our reading, as we do already for our hymns and prayers.

—Yours, &c., R. R. MEADE-KING.

West Derby, Liverpool,
December 18, 1910.

BOOKS AND REVIEWS.

THE GREAT ILLUSION.*

Most of us learnt our ideas about war in the fighting times of our boyhood from the Classics and from the Old Testament, and not having thought much about the subject since, we are still apt to talk in the language of Joshua or Julius Cæsar, forgetting that we have left behind the period when cattle could be lifted, huts burnt, and golden treasures taken as booty, when a population could be enslaved and sold; we still use the old vocabulary and speak of conquest as though it were a method of enrichment, as though military victories could acquire profitable trade, as though we could in any true sense own a country, and as though, in general, empire was the way to public and private emolument. The fact is, however, that all these statements are untrue, and that war cannot any longer continue between large and stable communities like the nations of Europe without involving conqueror and conquered in a common ruin. Physically, I think, the nations realise it. Our great undefended cities, our treasure-filled mansions, our costly town halls, our pervading network of railways and roads, our well-tilled fields, our docks and harbours, the complicated systems of wires by which light and power and messages are conveyed everywhere, these things would be destroyed in a single day of bombardment. We have grown unfit for war.

But beyond this, which is plain to the statesmen of Europe, there is an interwoven complexity of which these wires are but a type, which people generally have not yet seen, and which is brought out with simple directness by the writer who calls himself Norman Angell. This unseen enemy of war is the vast edifice of modern international credit; the creation, on anything like its present scale, of the last half-century. If the Germans should loot the Bank of England, says our author, the German general would destroy his own bank balance in Berlin. Credit would be at an end in England; all the banks would suspend payment; extensive

* The Great Illusion. By Norman Angell. 315 pp. Heinemann. 2s. 6d.

bankruptcies would follow, and this would react upon every Bourse in Europe and America, where credit also would fail, banks suspend payment, and debts could not be collected. The world of business is one, and no part of it can afford to shake any of the pillars of the building. Like Samson, the conquered captive would bring down in ruin the whole temple of trade on the head of his tormentors.

The author makes it plain that no enrichment follows to the conquering people; that trade has, and will continue to have, tracks of its own irrespective of Government control; that the security of Government bonds and private business is shown by the Stock Exchange quotations to be far higher in the small and helpless countries, such as Norway, Belgium, and Switzerland, than it is in the military empires of Russia and Germany.

The chapter on "The Indemnity Futility" is new in this edition. It shows that if England had to pay Germany an indemnity of a thousand millions sterling, the effect on Germany would be to throw this sum, in the form of goods, in a steady stream on her ports—thereby dislocating German industry, throwing whole trades out of work, and producing widespread distress. If it came, not in goods but in money, that money would only cause high prices to prevail, and be of no other use. Money by itself does not increase well-being. But this alternative would not, in fact, occur; a superfluity of gold would immediately begin to raise prices so much that imports would be stimulated and export trade would die away. This would be taken over by England, where scarcity of gold would have set up low prices, and a brisk foreign demand. Exactly this happened over the indemnity paid by France after 1871. In either alternative, the business community want no indemnity. Nor, as a mere money-making job, would the exactation of an indemnity ever repay the cost of the military peace establishment and the ruin wrought by war, generally followed, as it is, by reaction in home politics. Part I. of the book is an extension of the author's former work "Europe's Optical Illusion," but this edition contains about three times as many pages as its forerunner, and enters in its latter portion upon the more familiar ground of the evolutionary tendencies which make war moribund.

This part of the book meets the arguments derived from evolution and from the doctrine of survival after struggle. This has been done before; but the issue is so great and the illustrative matter so extensive that it needs to be repeatedly treated from the stores of many men's minds. In this book the argument is that of a man of affairs. Having shown that no material benefit can follow conquest, we still have (it is urged) to meet the fighting instincts, inherited from ages when they were useful, and we must not "leave human nature out of account." The author exposes the confusion of thought, so common among militant advocates, under which human nature is at once too mercenary to give up war from noble motives of justice and humanity, and not mercenary enough to drop it when they see there is nothing to be gained

by it. In four chapters proof is given, (1) that human nature is far from unchangeable, (2) that warlike nations do not inherit the earth, (3) that physical force is a constantly diminishing factor in human affairs, and with that comes corresponding modification of character, and (4) that co-operation is the growing factor in human institutions, and that the divisions of states, cutting clean across real community of effort and interest, are becoming attenuated, and are losing rapidly in importance. With them goes the remaining danger of war.

The struggle for survival is in fact not a struggle of man with man, but of man with the universe, his outward environment.

Since Socrates, or, say, since Roger Bacon, or (to be strictly accurate) since "Modern Painters," there have perhaps been few such wholesale prickings of pretentious bubbles as this little book performs. All the usual catchwords of thoughtless politics and half-understood sciences are found to denote empty terrors, doing Europe untold harm. Writers of sociology have taught us this before, from Herbert Spencer, Ritchie, Bagehot, and John Fiske onwards; but this cogent, simple, pamphleteering style of book is likely to drive it home, till people wake up open-eyed and ask themselves why they should any longer tolerate an apparatus for obsolete war, and so throw it off like a worn-out and very dirty garment.

That we are members one of another is a good Christmas thought, and this author, who depreciates the effectiveness of Peace advocacy from the Christian side, is yet found urging as a fruit of political theory the doctrine taught by Christ. Practice comes always long before theory, on matters elemental and vital; and so it is not till our own day that the teaching of Jesus has received at the hands of science that confirming homage which is its due.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE.

THIS new volume of the "International Library" * comes to us as a welcome memorial of Dr. Edward Everett Hale and his prophetic zeal in the cause of international peace. A well-known portrait of him as an old man (he was 87 when he died last year) forms the frontispiece of the volume, and there are two other portraits, one of Justice Brewer, whose Mohonk addresses are here added to Dr. Hale's, the other of Mr. A. K. Smiley, whom we take to be the generous host of the Arbitration Conferences, which have been held annually at the end of May, since 1895. What is "Mohonk"? we asked, when we saw the title of this book. The only answer Mr. Mead gives us, is to include two pictures in his book, one of the Lake Mohonk House, showing a huge hotel on the rocky shore of a lake, with a distant view of a range of hills; the other of the Conference Parlor, in

* Mohonk Addresses. By Edward Everett Hale and David J. Brewer. With Introduction by Edwin D. Mead. Published for the International School of Peace. Ginn & Co., Boston, Mass., 1910. Pp. 180. Price 90 cents, by mail \$1.

which during the conferences seats are provided for 400 persons. From Baedeker we learn that Lake Mohonk lies in the hill country West of the Hudson, about 80 miles north of New York. It appears to be a delightful holiday resort to which Mr. Smiley has for these last sixteen years been inviting representative gatherings of the friends of peace, for conference and the public declaration of principles, and appeals on the subject of International Arbitration.

Dr. Hale's addresses on these occasions were well worth collecting, and Mr. Mead in his introduction, sets them in their true light, as strong words of prophetic leadership, from one whose life had long been devoted to that cause. Already in 1871 he had written an article in *Old and New*, of which he was the Editor, on "The United States of Europe," recalling the dream of Henry IV. of France, at the end of the sixteenth century, and in 1889 he preached a sermon in Washington, in which he declared that "the Twentieth Century will apply the word of the Prince of Peace to international life," and went on to describe how the Great Powers would unite to establish an international court, a permanent tribunal of the highest dignity, to decide all questions arising between the nations, and so make an end of the barbarity of war. This was the constant burden of his Mohonk addresses, the first of which, in 1895, was on "A Permanent Tribunal," as were the second and the third; and then came the Tsar's Rescript and the Hague Conference, which is now making an actuality of the prophet's confident hope. It was the passion for justice which made Dr. Hale so ardent in this cause. War decides which of two nations is the stronger, not which is right, and his constant appeal was to all men of good will to insist that the great nations must unite to establish a Tribunal, after the model of the Supreme Court of the United States, which by wise and just decisions should gain the confidence of the civilised world. In the United States of America, "the strongest Peace Society in the world," the thing had been done, and Dr. Hale's plea, years before the Hague Conference, was that in Europe also it could and must be done. "The way to begin is to begin," he said, "it is not to talk about beginning." And he lived to see that beginning made.

THE YOUNG CRIMINAL.*

MR. RUSSELL, whose writings are always welcomed by those who seek to raise the standard of the boy-life in our midst, has given us this collection of living portraits as a supplement to his invaluable, more technical work, on the "Making of the Criminal," † and both volumes advance the same cause—the reform of the statutes affecting "Juvenile Adult Offenders." Here we see the offenders as they really are; we look upon them in the making, we follow them in their struggles and failures, in their lawless

* Young Gaol Birds. By Chas. E. B. Russell. Macmillan. 3s. 6d. net.

† Macmillan. 1906. 3s. 6d. net.

escapades, and in their periods of sincere endeavour; and here and there we catch a gleam of the golden thread that runs throughout the whole—the power of friendship.

For they can be reformed, these youths; or shall we say transformed? Or, better still, wisdom, experience, foresight, and friendship can discover the means to prevent their ever pursuing the darkening way. But do not think we are invited to congratulate the author on a series of brilliant successes. On the contrary, the very stuff with which he deals is of the kind that many would abandon as hopeless, and by which even the author has been baffled sometimes. There is the "Life Wasted," for instance, "as utterly mis-spent as any with which I have ever come in contact." But "there is some soul of good in things evil," and Mr. Russell sets himself, in every case, to "distil it out." "There are strange, unsounded depths," he says, "in the characters of the evil, as of the good, and we wrong them as much as they wrong society when we lightly label them 'bad,' and mentally fling them on the scrap-heaps of despair." If you don't succeed in every direction in the work of regeneration, seek out the reason for any faintest gleam of success you have had; realise the principle underlying that, and apply it with all your power in further enterprise. This is the author's attitude, and in the case of young lads of careless, wicked habits, he believes that they can be persuaded to enter upon a better life if they once become conscious of the appeal of a good motive. But more, every chapter of the book proclaims the further secret, that which means more than legislation—the power of friendship. Boys in workshops "need more than anything else an active interest on the part of older and better men"; a lad just out of prison requires "above all the friendship of a steady workmate." It is sufficiently clear, and it is proved again within the covers of this book, that evil companions degrade and ruin. Witness the power of friendship, and let failure guide us to success.

Assuredly the author is justified in calling aloud for more workers in this harvest-field. "If those responsible for the instruction of young men . . . would oftener point out to them . . . the service they might render to their God and their country by extending helping hands to the backsliding, I believe that youths and men inspired with zeal for humanity would be glad to discover such a field in which to express their faith in the possibilities of life." Wanted! "virile, healthy friendships" for citizens to be, in workshops, homes, schools, offices, yes, and in police-courts, in prisons, and in that critical period which follows upon discharge from reformatories and Borstal institutions. It was just such a need that prompted the suggestion of the "Probation System" which was outlined in "The Making of the Criminal," and which has since become law, in the act of 1907; but further legislation on the same lines is yet required, and in the "Postscript" to the essays under consideration the reader will find proposals demanding the earnest attention of those who have at heart the

future well-being of our State. As a companion to the earlier work, "Young Gaol Birds" is a most welcome publication, gathering together, as it does, and communicating to other workers in the same field, the results of ripe experience.

JEWISH SERMONS.*

It is not often that the Christian reader has an opportunity of learning what a Jewish sermon is like. If he takes the opportunity which the present volume affords him, he will find that there is a good deal of likeness between Jewish and Christian sermons, when he has allowed for the effect of references to the Talmud and occasional tags of Hebrew. Printed sermons are not amongst the more attractive forms of literature, because they depend so largely on the personality of the preacher; and that, unless very strong, is almost absent from the printed page. To those who heard the sermons preached, the printed volume may well be a grateful reminder and a treasured possession. But to the reader, especially if he be of another religious communion, the printed word can have no such power, unless in very rare cases. And in these sermons of Mr. Hyamson we can hardly find one of these rare cases. They are highly edifying and proper, from the Jewish point of view; but they have no fire in them, none of that spiritual force which shows that the words come from a soul fully alive and deeply in earnest. Judaism still has its prophets, but these sermons are hardly evidence of the fact. Christians would still hear gladly a Jewish prophet, as they have done before now. But for guidance along the level ways of ordinary religion and morality, they need not look beyond their own borders, for they will find abroad only what they find at home. Such guidance, for Jewish readers, is well provided in the present volume, and to them chiefly we commend it.

TOLSTOY AND THE VILLAGERS.†

THERE is a terrible pathos in these realistic descriptions of life in a Russian village written only a short time before Tolstoy's death, and dealing with the sufferings of the oppressed peasants, who are quite used to seeing a cow or a sheep not to speak of the *samovár*—taken in lieu of money to pay the taxes, and who can behold with the inertia of despair the distress of some helpless woman left with four or five hungry little ones to provide for when the bread-winner of the family has been "conscripted" by the Government. Some of these miserable people are garrulous and stupid; many are apathetic and much given to drinking *vodka*. Others, again, are full of that quiet courage and cheerful good humour which so often brought happy tears to the eyes of their interlocutor. But throughout the book Tolstoy dwells persistently on the evils of "land-slavery," which made him realise, as Henry George has said, that "in city slums and on the highways the barbarians are being bred who will do for our civilisation what

* The Oral Law and other Sermons. By M. Hyamson. London: D. Nutt. 3s. 6d. net.

† Three days in the Village, and other Sketches. By Leo Tolstoy. London: The Free Age Press. 6d. net.

the Huns and Vandals did for the civilisation of former ages." After one long and harrowing day in the village the Count was returning home with his friend, the doctor, and both were sad and silent. On reaching his house they saw at the porch, Tolstoy says, "a fine pair of horses harnessed tandem to a carpet-upholstered sledge. The handsome coachman was dressed in a sheepskin coat, and wore a thick fur cap. They belonged," he adds significantly, "to my son, who had driven over from his estate." He goes on to say how, presently, seated at the dinner table, which was decorated with beautiful flowers, while two footmen waited upon them, the conversation turned upon such futilities as the shower of roses which had been flung over a favourite performer recently at some concert or play, and the ailments of a certain man, "a very good judge and patron of music," who had to take a "trying and tedious" journey to Italy every winter for the improvement of his health—and all this while the memory of the death of an old peasant on the top of an oven, without any bedding or pillow, is fresh in his mind. It is contrasts like this, with all that they imply, which are reiterated unceasingly by Tolstoy—without malice, without invective, but with the sternness of a prophet who sees clearly what are the disintegrating forces of society, and will not be silent about them.

THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL. By E. H. Askwith, D.D. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 6s.

THE title of this book raises expectations that are not satisfied. It is a reprint of papers which originally appeared in the *Expositor*. Probably this accounts for the numerous repetitions from which the book suffers. But more important is the strong apologetic interest which makes it rather a "Plea for the Traditional View of the Fourth Gospel" than anything else. To take a few illustrations. The external evidence for the Apostolic authorship is said to be overwhelming, and only explained away by critics because it does not outweigh the internal evidence. Besides imputing a motive, the statement scarcely represents the facts. Professor Peake is not the only scholar on the traditional side who allows that the external evidence is not convincing in regard to the Apostolic authorship. Having assumed rather than proved that John the son of Zebedee wrote the gospel, Dr. Askwith proceeds to examine certain parts of the narrative "which touch the Synoptists most closely," looking, as he says, for signs of independence, and finding them. The Synoptic gospels, for the purpose of comparison with the fourth gospel, are accepted as "generally speaking historical." One result of the inquiry, is, however, to impair such historicity, and, in the case of Matthew, this is expressly stated. The reason why John is preferred at several points is because his is "first-hand evidence!" When "John" agrees with any other gospel, it confirms his accuracy, where he does not, it proves his independence and familiar acquaintance with the facts. On this view, the Cleansing of the Temple, and the Miraculous draught of Fishes occurred

twice, and there was both a Jerusalem and a Galilean ministry.

Very considerable ingenuity is displayed throughout, and the book is a good example of traditional English opinion of the fourth gospel. There are one or two misprints. On page 202, Jesus is actually made to ask the disciples "how many loves they have."

THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY TOLD TO THE YOUNG. By Gladys Davidson. London: T. Werner Laurie. 6s.

In preparing this book of "wonder tales" from the Old Testament for young people who have passed the earlier stages of childhood, Miss Davidson has sought to give an explanation of the origin and meaning of the Bible in accordance with modern scholarship, while at the same time setting forth "with love and reverence," often in the original words, some of its strangely dramatic stories and legends. She has so far succeeded that surely never again will it be possible for anyone who has been introduced to the great Book under her kindly guidance to lie awake at nights, as children in the past have so often done, oppressed by a terrible fear lest the jealous God of the Israelites should once again rain fire and brimstone on His disobedient people. The sting has been taken even out of the Serpent of Eden, and the reader is constantly reminded that the Jewish writers often used "quaint and simple" expressions, and entertained curious and crude beliefs, which modern people have long ago discarded. Miss Davidson unfolds the teaching of the Higher Criticism somewhat cautiously, however, and avoids the more subtle ethical problems which are apt to confuse the minds even of young people after a perusal of the stories of Abraham, Joseph, Samson, or Job. The book is attractively bound, and contains a number of double-tone illustrations from the old masters, including Rembrandt, Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Murillo, and Andrea del Sarto.

THINGS NEW AND OLD. Religious Essays by Stopford A. Brooke, J. Estlin Carpenter, and others. British and Foreign Unitarian Association, 1910. 2s. net.

THIS is another of the welcome little volumes in which the Unitarian Association of recent years has gathered up from ten to twelve at a time of the essays or sermons issued in its uniform series of tracts. The first volume, under the title "What do Unitarians Believe and Teach," appeared in March, 1906, and there are now eight or more such volumes, with various titles, taken from the first essay in each, e.g., "Authority in Religion," "The Faith of a Free Church," "The Place of Jesus in Modern Religion." The present volume opens with the annual sermon of the Association in 1909, preached by Dr. Carpenter, and hence bears its name. Mr. Stopford Brooke's contribution is a sermon on "The Resurrection of Jesus." Two of the ten essays are by Dr. Martineau, and it is significant of the prophetic character of his teaching that his well-known exposition of "Five Points of Christian Faith," which originally appeared as an article in the

Christian Teacher in 1841, should be so entirely timely in the present day. Its concluding appeal cannot be too often pondered by those who hold an unpopular position in the fellowship of Christian churches. The reprint of his sermon, "The Bible and the Child," preached in Paradise-street Chapel, Liverpool, in 1845, is also very welcome. The volume concludes with a clear and helpful word by Mr. Page Hoppes on "Is Salvation possible after Death?" and contains also the late Dr. John Fiske's valuable paper on "The Eternal Reality of Religion."

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

MESSRS. LIVERPOOL BOOKSELLERS' CO.:—
The Dawn of the Health Age: Benjamin Moore. 3s. 6d. net.

MESSRS. SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO.:—
More Philosophical Meditations by various Authors. 2s. 6d. net.

BERLIN SCHONEBERG, 1910, PROTESTANT-
ISCHER SCHRIFTENVERTRIEB:—Religion und Sozialismus. 1 mk. 50 pf.

FOR THE CHILDREN.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

THE story of the birth of Christ is familiar to us all. It is, indeed, one of the wonder-stories of the world, for, just because he became such a great teacher of men, and made them love him for the goodness that was in his heart, people were always ready to believe that his coming had been heralded by strange signs, and that even in his babyhood he was not like other children. In one legend it is said that a great peace reigned in the earth for seven years after Jesus was born; that during the next seven years the world was very troubled, for it was felt that great changes were at hand; while in the third period of seven years men were filled everywhere with a longing which they could not explain, new stars were lit in the sky, and old stars were whirled away "like dust and small stones beneath the wheels of a chariot." Milton, in his great poem on Christ's Nativity, speaks of the wonderful harping of cherubim and seraphim on the night when "the Prince of Light" began his reign on earth; and the beautiful old carols all tell of the mysteries which attended the birth of the "holy babe," of the star that guided the shepherds to the manger, the songs of the angels, and the gold, frankincense, and myrrh which were laid at the feet of Jesus by the wise men who had journeyed from the East to pay him homage.

All these tales are full of beauty, and we should not like to be robbed of the helpful thoughts they bring, although we know that similar legends have been woven round the sacred names of other religious teachers in various parts of the world, and that they have even been added to the chronicles of great emperors and warriors. But whenever the birth of Christ takes place in the heart of a human being—that is to say, when bad thoughts give way to good ones, when love overcomes anger, when passion and selfishness are exchanged for gentleness and kindness—a more wonderful thing happens than any-

thing that came to pass in Judaea nearly two thousand years ago. It can only be compared to the mysterious awakening of spring, when the birds are all singing after the long winter, and bluebells and primroses carpet the woods in obedience to a secret message from God which none of us can hear. The birth of Christ that I am speaking about is as wonderful as that, and we can no more explain it than we can explain how the Spirit of Life gives her summons to the little "brown brothers" in the wet mould, telling them to push up into the bright March sunshine their slender crocus-spears of purple and yellow.

One thing is certain, that when Christ is born in our hearts we can never again be the same as we were before this happened. We may try as much as we like, but we *cannot* say the unkind things, or think the jealous thoughts, that we did before the longing came to be loving and pitiful like Jesus. People are not able to throw off all their bad habits in a moment, of course, but at least they become ashamed of them, and that is a beginning. Then, too, although they may sometimes find it difficult to *love* their enemies, they will at any rate cease to think that the best way to settle all differences with them is by fighting! Neither will they care any more to selfishly enjoy the good things of the earth while others are in want. It will seem as if a great door had suddenly been opened, and they had passed out of a dingy prison-house into a beautiful land of meadows and streams and orchards, where all are free to pick the fruit and enjoy the sunshine together.

A great writer has told the story of a rich pagan who lived in Rome at a time when the disciples of Jesus were still alive. He had a friend named Pamphilus, the son of a slave, who was brought up and educated with him, but who had gone away when he became a man and joined the Christian "sect," as it was then called. Julius, the rich pagan, was not a bad man at heart, but he was very selfish and worldly. From time to time, however, bitter disappointments came to him, as they always do to people who live for pleasure, and expect to have everything their own way. He realised that he was not living the right kind of life, and that Pamphilus, his friend, had found happiness while he had only found misery; but he was not strong enough to surrender his wealth, his public honours, and the approval of his family to serve a despised Galilean teacher. Several times, indeed, he set out for the village where Pamphilus lived—one of a little brotherhood who possessed "all things in common," and lived a peaceful, charitable, industrious life in the midst of a corrupt Empire, selling grapes from their vineyards to obtain the necessities of life, and patiently enduring the sneers of the proud Romans. But he was always prevented from carrying out his intention by the advice of a certain clever man, older than himself, who pointed out to him that he would be lacking in all sense of duty to his family and his country if he joined the followers of that "ignorant deceiver," Jesus. Pamphilus whom he occasionally saw, put the matter in a very different light, and Julius was secretly attracted by his teaching and example; but the old way of life drew him

back again, and he tried to convince himself that his friend's new religion was full of errors and falsehoods, and dangerous in every way to the great Empire of Rome. He denounced it whenever he had the opportunity of doing so, and even acted as a judge at one time when some Christians were brought before the public tribunal and condemned to a cruel death. And all the time he grew more and more selfish, and more and more wretched, and even his own children—who took after their father—drove him nearly mad with their heartlessness and extravagance.

Years went by, and at last a crisis came in the life of Julius. He was weary of everything, and one day when he was sitting alone he found a scroll which had belonged to his wife, who had sympathised with the Christians but was now dead. It was inscribed with the words "Come unto me." The thought passed through his mind that he had been called many times before, and he had not obeyed the summons, but had continued to live for wealth, and fame, and position. Now, however, he would go where his desire was leading him. Without saying anything to anybody, he left the house, and was soon on the road to the Christian village. He again met the man who had dissuaded him from going years ago, and again heard the well-known arguments that had stopped him then; but this time he was proof against them. He pushed on, and at last, weary but thankful, reached the place where Pamphilus lived. He was gladly welcomed, and the very next day went out into the vineyards to work.

The first he came to was a young plantation weighed down with beautiful bunches of grapes, and tended by young people; but there was no room for a beginner. The second was a smaller crop, and here the brethren were working in pairs; but again Julius did not seem to be wanted. He then reached a third, where the vines were very crooked and old and almost devoid of fruit. Did they, he thought, represent his foolish and ill-spent life? He began to weep bitterly, but all at once he heard a white-haired old man saying to him, "Work, dear brother, work is sweet." He looked up, and then the one who had spoken showed him how to search for the rare clusters of grapes. When Julius had found some, his new friend said, "Look! In what are these inferior?" Julius then saw that the grapes, if small, were rich and sweet. "Grieve not," said the old man. "With God there is neither little nor great, only straight or crooked. Enter on the straight road! Work while ye have the light!" For twenty years after that Julius lived the simple self-sacrificing life in which Pamphilus had found so much happiness, helping his Christian brothers and sisters to lay the foundations of the kingdom of God with a glad and peaceful mind.

That is how Christ was born in the heart of a Roman hundreds of years ago, and that it is how it is still happening in the lives of many people all over the world to-day. For it is still the voice of Jesus that we hear saying "Come unto me" when we first realise how much misery is caused by selfishness and cruelty, and long to carry the light of love and truth into all the dark places of the earth. L. G. A.

MEETINGS AND SOCIETIES.

PRINCIPAL CARPENTER IN GLASGOW. THE CENTENARY OF THE ST. VINCENT STREET CHURCH.

THE series of meetings and services in celebration of the centenary of the Glasgow Unitarian Church, St. Vincent-street, begun and continued during the month of October, was brought to a close last week during the visit of the Rev. Principal J. Estlin Carpenter to Glasgow. On Saturday, 10th inst., a sale of work in aid of the church funds was held in the Charing Cross Halls. Mr. Thomas Semple, chairman of the Committee of Management of the church, presided. He introduced Principal Carpenter as a writer, teacher, and deep thinker who was known throughout the land, and as one who was a pillar and pioneer of their free and liberal religious faith. He came to them with a message, and he came to them at an opportune moment, because the church at the present time was suffering from various causes, some of them common to all churches in a large and expanding city. In the first place their finances were not in the position they would like them to be in, and they were also suffering from the fact that for some months past they had been without a minister. It was gratifying to the committee to see how the congregation had supported them during that time.

Principal Carpenter said that they, during the last few weeks, had been commemorating the centenary of their foundation. He reviewed the changes that had taken place in the city in that period, and said it was natural they should think of those things when commemorating the hundred years of their church life, and should ask what changes in the world of thought had taken place. Whatever might be the fact with regard to the particular development of Unitarianism in Scotland, it could not be denied that all over the country in the entire churches of Great Britain a vast change had taken place, approximating more and more, not always to their particular views of religious truth as Unitarians, but at any rate to their views in regard to the grounds on which religious truth was to be held. Not fifty years ago a great university scholar at Oxford could declare from the University pulpit that the Bible was none other than the Word of God—every book of it, every chapter, every verse, every word, nay, every letter was the direct utterance of the Most High—faultless, unerring, and supreme. No one, he thought, would now uphold such a doctrine in any theological chair throughout the land. What was the meaning of it? They had seen in the theology of this country an enormous change, as little by little the foundations of the old Calvinism had been undermined and much larger and broader views of the Divine Providence had taken their place. He spoke of the contributions of Scottish theologians to that movement in the direction of a larger and broader thought, and claimed that the churches were drawing closer to one ideal as the foundation of their belief. They might differ from one another in plan or style, nevertheless the worship was offered on the same foundation and to the same God. He referred to the recent World Missionary Conference as a magnificent conference to take counsel as to the best methods of missionary operations, and in particular the way in which the great religions of the East should be approached from the Christian standpoint. Those who were present came away profoundly impressed with the sense of union that underlay all diversity. Unfortunately Unitarians were not represented, but they would have their place in that Union by and by. At present they stood isolated,

far from each other. He supposed they had only six or seven churches altogether in Scotland. They stood there in Glasgow to a certain extent suspected, mistrusted, by orthodox people. But in the direction of social enterprise the members of their church had taken their place along with the members of other churches in all kinds of benevolent and fraternal operations for the welfare of the people. Thus, little by little, the prejudices of old times were passing away, and the newer light was being diffused even in quarters where one never expected it would penetrate. They in Glasgow might take heart and hope for the work they were doing. There must be difficulties as their city expanded and the population moved out to the suburbs. He did not know the local conditions, but he could not believe that the population of a million of people so deeply interested, as by tradition and education many of the Scottish people were, in the great problems of theology, could long be indifferent to the free and broad position which it was their privilege as Unitarians to offer them. He trusted, therefore, they would enter on the second hundred years of their life full of courage and hope, bearing faithful witness to the truth, and concluded by declaring the sale of work open.

The efforts of the ladies were rewarded by the results of the sale, which realised the sum of £175. This will clear off the present deficit and leave a surplus available for necessary church cleaning and decoration.

On the following Sunday, the 11th inst., the Rev. Dr. Carpenter preached in the morning and evening at St. Vincent-street, and on the Monday evening he delivered a public lecture on the "Historical Jesus." Mr. Thomas Ballantyne presided in the place of Prof. Henry Jones, who was prevented by illness. All the meetings were well attended. Dr. Carpenter gives his concluding lecture on Thursday evening, 22nd inst., on "The Theological Christ."

NEWS OF THE CHURCHES.

Special Notice to Correspondents.—Items news for this column should be sent immediately after the event, and should reach the editor on Wednesday, except in the case of meetings held too late in the week to make this possible.

Astley.—A sale of work was held on Saturday last. Mr. John Lee, of Atherton, a former secretary of the congregation, presided. Mr. Peter Gorton, of Park-lane, opened the sale in a sympathetic speech, and spoke of the influence of his late teacher, Rev. George Fox, on his own life. The sales, together with donations, amounted to £66.

Blackpool.—The Unitarian Free Church, North Shore, reports a successful sale of work. Mr. W. Greenwood, who opened the sale, said they had a debt on their church property amounting to about £300, and they were very anxious to clear it off. A larger effort would be made next year, when a bazaar was being organised. A vote of thanks was proposed by the Rev. Horace Short, and seconded by Mr. Wood. The proceeds for the day amounted to £26.

Derby: Friar Gate Chapel.—To celebrate what is probably the 350th anniversary of the origin of Friar Gate Chapel, the congregation has put forth a special effort this year to raise money to repair and redecorate the ancient chapel and to renovate the organ. This effort was brought to a successful issue by the biennial bazaar which ended on December 10, and which brought in a gross total of over £202. Donations and promises from members and friends, in response to a special appeal,

brought this sum up to about £360, and it is hoped when all incidental expenses have been met that there will be over £343 in hand. This amount will, it is believed, suffice to carry out the object in view and to guarantee the congregation against debt for the next two years. Recently very welcome visits have been paid to the chapel by the Presidents of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the Triennial Conference. Mr. John Harrison was unavoidably prevented from paying a promised visit on the first day of the bazaar, when his place was filled by Mr. J. C. Warren, M.A., of Nottingham, and on the last day Mrs. Enfield Dowson, of Hyde, was the opener. The congregation has fittingly celebrated this auspicious year by becoming independent of the financial aid of the district association.

Dover.—On Sunday, December 18, Peace Sunday, at the Adrian-street Church, Mrs. Ginever preached a sermon on "Peace among all Nations." There was a large congregation.

Hackney: New Gravel Pit Church.—The annual Sunday-school prize distribution took place on Sunday afternoon, December 18, after a children's service in the church conducted by the Rev. Gordon Cooper, of Manford-street. Miss Whitehead, in giving away the prizes, referred to her great affection for the Hackney church and school, and her long connection with them, and hoped that many of the young people present would come in time to love and revere them both as she did. Mr. J. S. Harding, who presided, spoke highly of the work done in the school, and said that there had been an increase in the number of children attending this year, and that a good high standard of conduct and attendance had been maintained. The work in connection with the penny savings bank of the Sunday-school and of the mothers' meeting showed also very satisfactory results, the amount deposited during the year 1910 exceeding any previous record.

Liverpool: Rathbone Literary Club.—A meeting of the club was held on Friday, December 16, 1910, the president being in the chair. References were made to the past record of the club, which had reached its twenty-fifth year, and the secretary read a congratulatory letter received from Rev. Henry Gow, of Hampstead, who was the first president. Two of the founders, Mr. W. H. Thomas, who has been both secretary and treasurer, and Rev. A. Ernest Parry, of Liscard-in-Wallasey, gave interesting reminiscences of their connection with the club. Mr. W. G. Haydon, F.L.S., then delivered a lecture, entitled "A Pilgrimage to Concord, Mass., U.S.A.," describing in detail his visit to the places rendered famous by their connection with Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Louisa M. Alcott, and others.

London: Brotherhood Church, Southgate-road, N.—This church, where Rev. J. Bruce Wallace laboured from 1892-02, has become associated with the Liberal-Christian League, with the Rev. F. R. Swan, the travelling secretary, as minister in charge. He will commence his work on the first Sunday in the New Year, and continue, as far as practicable, to organise and visit branches for the League.

Middlesborough.—Under the auspices of Christ Church Unitarian Guild a sale of work was held on December 14. The opening ceremony was performed by Mr. E. Cox-Walker, of Darlington, under the presidency of Miss Fallows. On 15th inst. Rev. W. H. Lambelle presided at the Guild "At Home," this being the first held in the schoolroom since the completion of the alterations.

The Eastern Union.—In connection with the Eastern Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches a public meeting was held in Churchgate-street Chapel, Bury St. Edmunds, on Thursday evening, December 15. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. M. Rowe, B.A. (president of the Union), F. K.

Freeston, J. M. Connell, and Mr. A. M. Stevens. Later on Mr. Freeston gave his delightful lantern lecture on "Mrs. Gaskell and her Works." Despite the inclemency of the weather and the political excitement, which had been intensified by Mr. Asquith's visit to Bury a few nights before, there was a good attendance.

NOTES AND JOTTINGS.

CHRISTMAS TOYS AT NUEREMBERG.

"The toy-shops in Kaiser Strasse still appeal to the imagination of children," says a writer in the *Outlook*, "by the simplicity of their products . . . The toys made by hand during the long winter months in the little houses in the Black Forest make the Schwarzwald toy-shop in Baden-Baden, to one who has not been smitten with old age by too great familiarity with mechanical devices for making children forget time instead of stimulating their inventive faculty, one of the most fascinating shops in the world. There is no more delightful background for Christmas, with its beautiful religious truth, its generous room for friendship, its happy play with childhood, than the many-gabled houses, the narrow streets, the river lined with century old homes, the friendly castle, the memories of painters, workers in stone, poets, and humble craftsmen of the Guilds whose banners used to hang in the old churches in ancient Nuremberg. The note of the art of Albrecht Dürer, Hans Sachs, Adam Kraft, Peter Visscher, was its intimate relation with the life of the old town; its fellowship with simple human needs and experiences; its homelike familiarity with use and wont."

THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS DAY.

It is to the strange Persian religion called Mithraism that we owe, according to the late Professor Bigg, the name of Sunday and of the other days of the week, and probably the date of Christmas Day. It was, he points out, a very common practice to cast the horoscope of a new-born child, and the planetary day-names were probably brought into vogue in Rome by the Chaldean astrologers, who were in close alliance with Mithraism. Mithraism was very strong among the legions on the German frontier and in Britain, and it was probably by this road that the day-names found entrance among the Teutons and Celts. December 25 was the *Natalis Invicti* and, when Christmas was instituted in the West in the fourth century, it has been thought that this day was selected as that of the Nativity in order to drive out Mithra from one of his strongholds.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF PEACE.

The Peace Movement in America is making great strides, and is being encouraged as it never has been before by the churches, commercial organisations, and by the press. We have received a batch of recent pamphlets from the International School of Peace, Boston, which are well printed, well-written, and attractive in appearance. The International Library, which has been started with the object of meeting the great needs for obtaining the extensive literature of the Peace movement in a cheap form, ought to be an effective means of educating public opinion on matters relating to the settlement of differences between nations in a friendly and practical manner. Attention is drawn by Mr. Edwin Ginn in one of these pamphlets to the fact that a strong American School Peace League is now in existence. "An important committee of university presidents and others

has been formed," he says, "to promote the same interest in our colleges and universities, with most encouraging results, and the present multiplication of Cosmopolitan Clubs in our universities is a remarkable sign of the times."

Among the pamphlets which we have received are: "The Results of the Two Hague Conferences and the Demands Upon the Third Conference," by Edwin D. Mead; "The Literature of the Peace Movement," by the same writer; "The Mission of the United States in the Cause of Peace," by David J. Brewer; and "Educational Organisations Promoting International Friendship," by Lucia Ames Mead. From the American Association for International Conciliation also comes a new pamphlet, "The Capture and Destruction of Commerce at Sea," by F. W. Hirst, Editor of *The Economist*, London.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH.

There will hardly be surprise, though much genuine regret, that the aged Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. Alexander, has decided to resign. He was born in 1824 and educated at Oxford, but the whole of his clerical life has been passed in his native country and he has long been the embodiment of everything that was charming and distinguished in the Episcopal Church of Ireland. He is the last of the bishops appointed before the disestablishment of the church, having been consecrated Bishop of Derry and Raphoe in 1867. He once described himself as the only man living who had ever been turned out of the House of Lords. A poet of some distinction, and a silver-tongued orator, he is the last survivor of the renowned preachers of the Victorian period. Mrs. Alexander, who died in 1895, was widely known as the authoress of the hymn "There is a green hill far away."

FIABINS IN STAINED GLASS.

We learn from the *Daily News* that a stained glass portrait group of well-known Fabians has been executed for Mr. Bernard Shaw by Miss Caroline Townsend. The window, which measures two feet by three, is coloured in rich thirteenth century yellows, greens, blues, purples, and reds, and shows Mr. Shaw and Mr. Sidney Webb in working clothes of an archaic pattern remoulding the glowing world upon an anvil. Mr. Edward Pease, like Puck, blows the bellows. The attitudes and interior are taken from a thirteenth century woodcut of a blacksmith's shop. Right and left in a lower panel, facing a pile of books, the works of members of the Society, are six men and six women in a kneeling attitude whose reverent faces are those of prominent Fabians. At the top of the window is a shield bearing a coat of arms—a wolf rampant in sheep's clothing on field gules.

THE FAMILY PEW.

"Before the passion for 'restoration' had set in, and ere yet Sir Gilbert Scott had transmogrified the parish churches of England, the family pew was indeed the ark and sanctuary of the territorial system—and a very comfortable ark too. It had a private entrance, a round table, a good assortment of arm chairs, a fireplace, and a wood-basket. And I well remember a wash-leather glove of unusual size which was kept in the wood-basket for the greater convenience of making up the fire during Divine service. 'You may restore the church as much as you like,' said the lay rector of our parish to an innovating incumbent, 'but I must insist on my family pew not being touched. If I had to sit in an open seat, I should never get a wink of sleep again.' "—Mr. G. W. E. RUSSELL in the *Commonwealth*.

SUPERSTITION AND THE DRINK PROBLEM IN RUSSIA.

We are indebted to the *Christian World* for an interesting account of a crusade against drink waged within a short distance from St. Petersburg. There is, not far from the Imperial Porcelain Works, a splendid church dedicated to the Virgin in her capacity as "Comforter of the Heavy Laden," and therein is placed a holy icon which was fished out of the Neva by some ignorant peasants, who believed that they had witnessed a miracle, as the icon, which is of metal, did not sink. There is another legend connected with the miraculous illumination of the image of the Virgin, and thousands of pilgrims come from far and near to bow before it.

* * *

One of the priests of the church is Father Gregori, a man filled with missionary zeal, and he conceived the idea of making these gatherings serve a useful purpose by preaching a crusade against drink. "If these people come to see this icon they shall listen to me," he said; and thousands flocked to his standard. Father Gregori had pledges printed, and these he gave out to his disciples, who signed them. Some pledged themselves to abstain from vodka for a month, some for three, some for six months, some for a year. The enthusiasm was infectious, and from every province of the empire men, women, and even children came to the priest not so much to see the wonder-working icon as to be enrolled in this new Band of Hope. An eye-witness describes the endless streams of these people waiting at the church door all through the live-long day, waiting to see the image of the "Virgin Mother of the Heavy-laden," and when they have seen it tramping to the priest Gregori to sign the pledge of abstinence, "men who have been," as Maxim Gorki has called them, hoping to be men once more.

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